



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY
2300 E STREET NW
WASHINGTON DC 20372-5300

IN REPLY REFER TO

BUMEDINST 5728.1
BUMED-M00P
1 Oct 2003

BUMED INSTRUCTION 5728.1

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

Subj: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY WITHIN THE BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY (BUMED)

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5720.44A
(b) OPNAVINST 3100.6G
(c) NAVMEDCOMINST 5600.1
(d) BUMEDINST 5721.3
(e) SECNAVINST 5214.2B

1. Purpose. To establish procedures and provide guidance for the conduct of the Public Affairs Program within BUMED.
2. Cancellation. NAVMEDCOMINST 5728.1A.
3. Background. Public affairs is a management function which researches and evaluates the attitudes of the public, examines the policies of the organization with regard to the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. For BUMED, public affairs is also the sum total of all the means used to influence public opinion, communicate with internal and external audiences, and provide public recognition for the achievements of Navy Medicine and its personnel.
4. Mission. The public affairs mission of BUMED is to support the policies and objectives of the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief, BUMED with programs which communicate the competence and quality of Navy Medicine and its personnel, to provide proper recognition, and to communicate with all publics internal and external.
5. Goals. The goals of the BUMED Public Affairs Program are:
 - a. To promote confidence of the American people in the United States Navy Medical Department and support Navy and Marine Corps readiness goals through programs, which communicate the excellence of Navy medical and dental practice, research, and readiness.
 - b. To effectively communicate information which supports the overall goals of BUMED in providing care to the various authorized beneficiary groups.
 - c. To help in the upgrading of patient-provider relationships at the command and individual levels by advising in areas of interpersonal relations and sensitivity training for all patient contact personnel.

d. To increase awareness and understanding of Medical Department operations as a function of overall military readiness and morale by active communication with operational and line commanders.

e. To promote Medical Department recruiting and improve morale within BUMED through a continuing program designed to highlight the excellence of Navy medical care and research and training programs.

f. To provide timely, concise, and accurate information to the media when appropriate.

g. To maintain an active and aggressive internal public affairs program to keep staff members and their dependents fully informed of command activities and overall Navy policies and programs.

h. To maintain active involvement and communication with local civic organizations, medically related societies, and other interested groups.

6. Organization. The organization of BUMED public affairs follows the BUMED chain of command.

a. Echelon four co-principal duty public affairs officers (PAOs) are responsible for the execution of external and internal public affairs programs dealing with issues and audiences within their sphere of cognizance, and for keeping their respective echelon three PAOs informed of those issues or events which transcend the local command's area of responsibility.

b. Echelon three PAOs are responsible for the execution of external and internal public affairs programs dealing with issues and audiences within their sphere of cognizance, assisting with and supervising the public affairs efforts of their subordinate commands, and for keeping the BUMED Special Assistant for Public Affairs (M00P) informed on those issues or events which transcend the echelon three command's areas of responsibility.

c. The BUMED Special Assistant for Public Affairs (M00P) is responsible for the overall public affairs policy, plans, and programs for BUMED and its subordinate commands. The BUMED PAO is responsible for public affairs matters that involve those issues under the aegis of BUMED that are of a command wide, Navy-wide, or national issue nature.

7. Action

a. Commanding officers and officers in charge (OIC) of all echelon four commands will:

(1) Appoint, in writing, PAOs for their respective commands. Officers in command or their deputies should not act as PAOs. In selecting a PAO, officers in command should consider the officer's maturity, knowledge of Navy and of Navy medicine, aptitude, and capability. The selectee should, whenever possible, receive basic PAOs training at the Defense Information School, Fort Meade, MD. Assistance in arranging quotas for this training can be obtained from

BUMED Public Affairs (M00P). PAOs at echelon four commands are considered “co-principal duty” PAOs vice “collateral duty” in recognition that PAOs assigned to the staffs of geographic commanders are 1650 designator officers (special duty PAOs) detailed by the Naval Military Personnel Command. For additional training opportunities, contact BUMED PAO to reserve a seat in the Annual Navy Medicine Public Affairs Orientation.

(2) Ensure PAOs are on the executive staff, reporting to the commander, commanding officer, or OIC through the chief of staff, executive officers, or assistant OIC.

b. Public affairs officers will:

(1) Familiarize themselves with the contents and guidance of references (a) through (d).

(2) Provide timely, concise, and accurate information to local media when proper. Queries from national media will be quickly coordinated through the chain of command.

(3) Tell the chain of command immediately of all incidents that have even the slightest possibility of media attention. PAOs will provide a proper press line for each event calling for an Operational Report (OPREP). The press line consists of a statement and possible questions and appropriate answers. The press line will be transmitted to BUMED as soon after the transmission of the OPREP as possible.

(4) Exploit every opportunity to publicize the excellence of Navy medical and dental practice, research and readiness in local publications, and through the chain of command, in media of wider coverage.

(5) Communicate information on local actions that impact on providing care to various authorized beneficiary groups. Communication of programs that have regional or national impact or media interest must be coordinated with the chain of command.

(6) Communicate information on local actions that impact on providing care to the various authorized beneficiary groups to the local line and operational commanders. Communication of programs that have regional or national impact or media interest must be coordinated with the chain of command.

(7) Actively engage in a continuing program to highlight and publicize the achievements of the staff of the local command through the Fleet Home Town News Program, and through submissions to Navy and Marine Corps Medical News.

(8) Operate and maintain an internal public affairs program to keep staff members and their dependents fully informed of command activities and overall Navy policies and programs.

(9) Maintain an active involvement with local civic organizations, medically related societies, and other interested groups. PAOs will assist their commanding officers in establishing a rapport with these groups and in securing opportunities to speak before them.

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(10) Aid in the upgrading of patient-provider relationships at the command and individual levels by providing advice in interpersonal relations and sensitivity training for all patient contact personnel. PAOs should work closely with patient affairs officers, patient contact representatives, health benefits advisors, and quality assurance personnel in this effort.

8. Reports. The requirements contained in paragraph 7 are exempt from reports controlled by reference (e), Part IV, paragraph G7.



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Distribution:

SNDL, FH (BUMED Command activities)

All internal BUMED codes

Available at: <http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/instructions/directives/default.asp>